



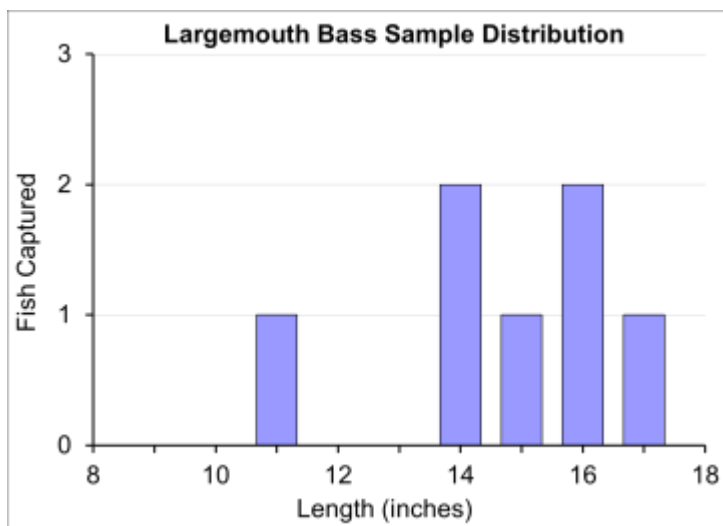
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Fishery Information Sheet

LAKE: Medford Flowage

COUNTY: Taylor

YEAR: 2018

Medford Flowage is a 19-acre impoundment on the Black River within the City of Medford. Maximum and average depths are 8 and 4 feet. Water clarity is low, and consequently aquatic vegetation is sparse. Boulders comprise about half the nearshore lakebed and the remainder is rubble, gravel, sand, silt, and detritus. Its shorelands have been altered for commerce and recreation—only about 15% resemble a natural condition. A boat ramp, fishing pier, riverside walkway, and manicured shoreline provide convenient access for angling in an urban setting. Following a 10-year fish stocking hiatus, Taylor County Sportsmen's Association and WDNR stocked 1495 largemouth bass fingerlings in 2014 and 2016. In late spring 2018 when water temperature was 76°F, WDNR assessed the fish community by electrofishing to examine the effects of a reservoir drawdown that occurred in late summer 2017 without careful planning to protect aquatic resources.



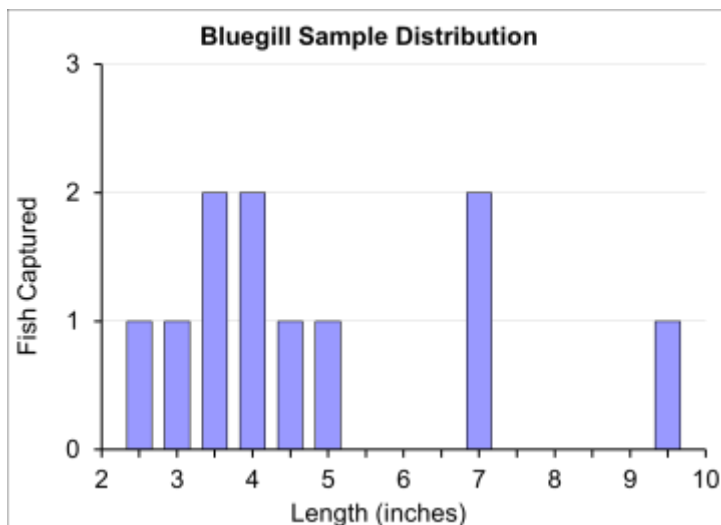
Largemouth Bass

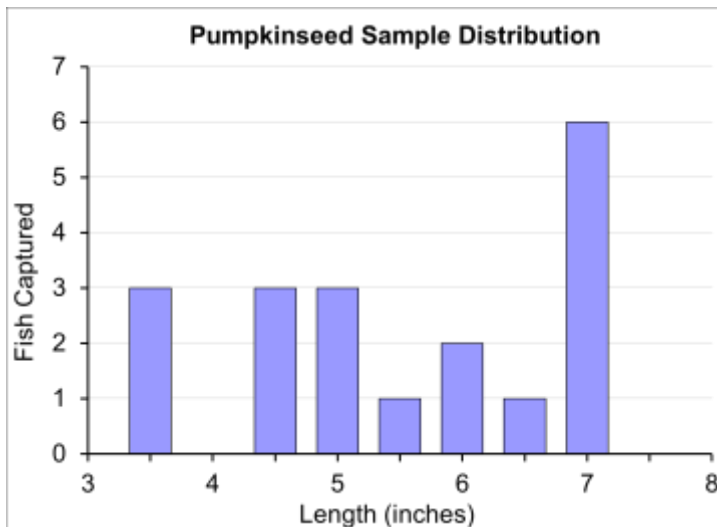
We captured 7 largemouth bass ranging 11.4 – 17.8" and averaging 15.3" long. Our capture rates of 4.2 bass per mile and 8.5 bass per hour were about a fifth of our catch rates in late spring 2013, signifying an 80% decrease in largemouth bass abundance. Based on the near absence of small- and intermediate-size bass, we suspect that most survivors from the 2014 and 2016 stocked year classes were permanently displaced downstream when the flowage was suddenly and rapidly drained to the stream channel elevation. The larger bass in our sample probably found temporary refuge upstream in the

river and returned when normal reservoir level was restored about a week later. In 2018 WDNR again stocked 500 largemouth bass fingerlings to hasten the recovery of this popular fishery.

Bluegill

Electrofishing the entire shoreline yielded a small sample of 11 bluegills, ranging 2.9 – 9.8" and averaging 5.1" long. Our capture rates of 6 bluegills \geq 3" per mile and 12 per hour suggested that population abundance decreased by 70% since our 2013 survey. The population will rebound without intervention as the young fish in our sample mature and reproduce. Taylor County Sportsmen's Association received a fish stocking permit to purchase non-hybrid bluegills and speed up recovery, but their supplier could not fulfill their order in 2018.



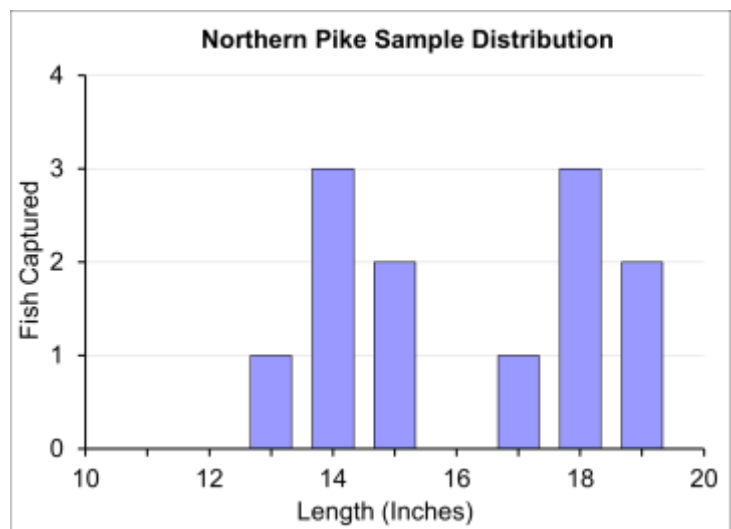


Pumpkinseed

We captured 19 pumpkinseeds, more than any other fish species in this survey. They ranged 3.7 – 7.4" and averaged 5.7" long. Our capture rates of 11 pumpkinseeds/mile and 23/hour reflect a 57% decrease in numbers since our last survey. Like largemouth bass and bluegills, we suspect that pumpkinseeds were swept over the dam with no avenue for return to the flowage. The wide range of sizes and ages in our sample suggest that population recovery is already underway, and no intervention is necessary.

Northern Pike

Though late spring electrofishing does not describe their population status, we caught a dozen northern pike that ranged 13.4 – 19.8" and averaged 16.6". We found 3 times as many pike in 2018 versus 2013, and their size range was nearly identical in both small samples.



Other Species

Not surprisingly, we also caught 18 white suckers 16.4 – 20.6", a species adapted to flowing water and able to avoid displacement. Additionally, our sample included four rock bass 5.2 – 6.6", three yellow perch 3.9 – 4.2", and one 11.7-inch black crappie. Our 2013 sample had nine crappies and one perch. The Sportsmen's Association purchased and stocked 600 black crappie yearlings in fall 2018. We are confident that all fish populations will eventually repopulate the impoundment and offer similar angling diversity within a few years.

For questions or additional information contact:

Jeff Scheirer, Fisheries Biologist
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 875 4th Ave. S.
 Park Falls, WI 54552
 715-762-1354
Jeffrey.Scheirer@wisconsin.gov